

Huasteca Nahuatl

Huasteca Nahuatl is a Nahuan language spoken by over a million people in the region of La Huasteca in Mexico, centered in the states of Hidalgo (Eastern) and San Luis Potosí (Western).^[3]

Ethnologue divides Huasteca Nahuatl into three languages: Eastern, Central, and Western, as they judge that separate literature is required, but notes that there is 85% mutual intelligibility between Eastern and Western. Half of Eastern speakers know no Spanish.^[4]

XEANT-AM radio broadcasts in Huasteca Nahuatl.

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Demographics

Huasteca Nahuatl is spoken in the following municipalities in the states of Hidalgo, Veracruz, and San Luis Potosí.^[5]

Hidalgo (121,818 speakers)

- Huejutla Reyes (56,377 speakers)
- Huautla (18,444 speakers)
- Yahualica (14,584 speakers)
- Xochiatipan (12,990 speakers)
- Atlapexco (12,445 speakers)
- Jaltocan (6,978 speakers)

Veracruz (98,162 speakers)

- Chicontepec (41,678 speakers)
- Ixhuatlán de Madero (21,682 speakers)
- Benito Juárez (11,793 speakers)
- Ilamantlan (9,689 speakers)
- Ixcatepec (6,949 speakers)

Huasteca Nahuatl	
Native to	Mexico
Region	La Huasteca (San Luis Potosí, Hidalgo, Puebla, Veracruz)
Native speakers	(1.0 million cited 1991–2000) ^[1]
Language family	Uto-Aztecan <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Aztecan (Nahuan)<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Nahuatl<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Huasteca Nahuatl
Writing system	Latin
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	Variously: nhe – Eastern (Veracruz) nch – Central nhw – Western (Tamazunchale)
Glottolog	huas1257 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/huas1257) ^[2]

- Zontecomatlán (6,371 speakers)

San Luis Potosí (108,471 speakers)

- Tamazunchale (35,773 speakers)
- Axtla de Terrazas (17,401 speakers)
- Xilitla (16,646 speakers)
- Matlapa (16,286 speakers)
- Coxcatlan (12,300 speakers)
- Chalchicuautla (10,065 speakers)

Phonology

The following description is that of Eastern Huasteca.

Vowels

	Front	Back
High	i iː	
Mid-high	e eː	
Mid-low		o oː
Low	a aː	

Consonants

Huasteca Nahuatl consonants

	Labial	Alveolar		Palatal	Velar		Glottal
		central	lateral		plain	labialized	
Nasal	m	n					
Plosive	p	t			k, g	kʷ	ʔ
Affricate		ts	tʃ	tʃ			
Continuant		s		ʃ			h
Semivowel				j		w	
Liquid		r	l				

Orthography

Huasteca Nahuatl currently has several proposed orthographies, most prominent among them those of the Instituto de Docencia e Investigación Etnológica de Zacatecas (IDIEZ),^[6] Mexican government publications, and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL).^[7]

IDIEZ

- Their orthography is based on the evolution of Classical Nahuatl. It is somewhat of a deep orthography based on morphology since it aims to provide a unified system across regions.
- uses ⟨ca⟩, ⟨que⟩, ⟨qui⟩, ⟨co⟩ for /k/
- takes morphology into account
- uses ⟨za⟩, ⟨ce⟩, ⟨ci⟩, ⟨zo⟩ for /s/
- uses ⟨h⟩ for /h/

Mexican government publications

- Is influenced by modern Spanish conventions and is a very surface-based orthography. It aims to provide easy literacy across regions but with a different writing system in each one.
- uses ⟨k⟩ for /k/
- does not take morphology into account
- uses ⟨s⟩ for /s/
- uses ⟨j⟩ for /h/

SIL

- Somewhat based on modern Spanish conventions, mostly surface-based orthography as well but does not completely dispose of Classical Nahuatl conventions.
- uses ⟨ca⟩, ⟨que⟩, ⟨qui⟩, ⟨co⟩ for /k/
- does not take morphology into account
- uses ⟨s⟩ for /s/
- uses ⟨j⟩ for /h/

Sample text: 'a book about my location.'

- IDIEZ: ce tlahcuilolli tleh campā niitztoꝑ.
- Government: se tlajkuiloli tlej kampa niitstok
- SIL: se tlajcuiloli tlej campā niitztoꝑ

Notes

1. Eastern (Veracruz) (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/nhe/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
Central (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/nch/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
Western (Tamazunchale) (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/nhw/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Huasteca Nahuatl" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/huas1257>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Kimball: p. 196.
4. Eastern Huasteca Nahuatl (https://www.ethnologue.com/16/show_language/nhe) at *Ethnologue* (16th ed., 2009)
5. Rodríguez & Valderrama 2005: page 168.
6. IDIEZ:[1] (<http://www.macehualli.org>).
7. Bible.is: Old Testament in Eastern Huasteca Nahuatl (<http://www.bible.is/NHETBL/Gen/1>).

References

- Kimball, Geoffrey (1990). "Noun Pluralization in Eastern Huasteca Nahuatl". *International Journal of American Linguistics*. **56** (2): 196–216. doi:[10.1086/466150](https://doi.org/10.1086/466150) (<https://doi.org/10.1086/466150>).
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